

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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O 161030Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6043

S E C R E T KINSHASA 0388

NODIS

DEPT RPT LUSAKA, MOSCOW, USUN, ELSEWHERE AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, CG, AO, UN

SUBJ: ANGOLA: GOZ CONTEMPLATES UN ACTION

REF: (A) KINSHASA 340; (B) STATE 10167

1. FOREIGN MINISTER BULA CALLED ME IN URGENTLY LATE EVENING JAN 15. HE SAID PRESIDENT MOBUTU HAD JUST VISITED DILOLO, ZAIRIAN TOWN ON ANGOLA'S EASTERN BORDER, WHERE THERE HAD BEEN DAMAGE AND CIVILIAN CASUALTIES CAUSED BY ARTILLERY FIRED FROM WITHIN ANGOLA. THE PRESIDENT HAD SENT WORD TO BULA, VIA BISENGIMANA, TO INFORM ME AS FOLLOWS:

A. ZAIRE CONSIDERS ITSELF TO HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS;

B. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS ATTACK, ZAIRE OFFICIALLY REQUESTS URGENT US MILITARY ASSISTANCE;

C. ZAIRE IS CONSIDERING TAKING THE MATTER TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, BUT WOULD FIRST LIKE OUR ADVICE ON WHETHER AND HOW THIS SHOULD BE DONE;

D. PRESIDENT MOBUTU WOULD LIKE TO SEND BULA TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION FURTHER WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER.

2. BULA SAID MOBUTU WANTED THIS MESSAGE SENT TO THE SECRETARY, AND I SAID I WOULD OF COURSE CONVEY IT. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERIES, BULA SAID HE DID NOT YET HAVE
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DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE DILOLO ATTACK. HOWEVER, "IT

WAS CERTAIN THAT" RUSSIANS AND CUBANS WERE INVOLVED"
(PRESUMABLY SOVIET ARTILLERY/ROCKETS MANNED BY CUBANS)
AND GOZ THEREFORE HELD THOSE TWO PARTIES RESPONSIBLE. WHEN
I NOTED RECENT REPORTS THAT ZAIRIAN JET AIRCRAFT HAD
ATTACKED TEXEIRA DE SOUZA JUST ACROSS THE BORDER IN ANGOLA,
BULA SAID THIS WAS IN RETALIATION FOR THE ATTACK ON DILOLO.
HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT GOZ INTENDED TO INFORM OTHER GOVERNMENTS
AMONG THE TWENTY-TWO WHICH HAD HELD THE LINE AGAINST MPLA AT OAU
SUMMIT THAT ZAIRE'S SECURITY WAS THREATENED, AND TO SEEK
THEIR SUPPORT AND REQUEST THAT THEY TOO APPEAL TO THE US FOR
MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO RESIST SOVIET/CUBAN AGGRESSION.

3. ON THE UN, I REMINDED BULA THAT WE HAD DISCUSSED
THIS THE NIGHT BEFORE AND THAT I HAD ALREADY SOUGHT
WASHINGTON'S ADVICE (REF A). BULA EXPLAINED THAT GOZ
SERIOUSLY CONTEMPLATING SOME STEP WITH UN BUT HAD NOT YET
DECIDED WHAT WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE. I
SAID I WOULD AGAIN ASK FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS.

4. FINALLY, WITH RESPECT TO BULA'S PROPOSAL THAT HE
GO IMMEDIATELY TO US TO MEET WITH THE SECRETARY, I
DREW ON REASONING CONTAINED PARA 7, REF B. TO SUGGEST THAT
THIS MIGHT NOT BE EITHER FEASIBLE OR ADVISABLE. IN
THIS CONNECTION, I STRESSED THAT, WHILE WE WISHED TO MAINTAIN
CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH ZAIRE AND OTHER AFRICAN GOVERN-
MENTS, IT WAS OUR VIEW THAT BOTH OUR AND AFRICANS' INTERESTS
COULD BEST BE SERVED BY DOING SO DISCREETLY AND AVOIDING
PUBLICITY THAT HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS WOULD MOST LIKELY ENTAIL.
BULA REPLIED THAT GOZ, FOR ITS PART, WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEMS
IF SUCH MEETINGS WERE REVEALED; ZAIRE WAS BEING ATTACKED
AND IT HAD NO QUALMS ABOUT TURNING TO THE US FOR HELP. ON
THE OTHER HAND, BULA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THERE MIGHT BE
REASONS WE WOULD WISH TO AVOID OVERT, HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS
AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME AND HE DID NOT WISH "TO COMPLICATE
OUR DOMESTIC SCENE ANY MORE THAN IT ALREADY WAS". WOULD
IT BE PREFERABLE, HE SUGGESTED, TO MEET THE SECRETARY
DISCREETLY, PERHAPS IN EUROPE ON HIS WAY TO MOSCOW? I
REITERATED SOME OF OUR CONCERNS BUT AGREED TO CONVEY
HIS REQUEST AGAIN IN THE LIGHT OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS HE
HAD REPORTED TO US.

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5. FOLLOWING MY TALK WITH BULA WE LEARNED FROM BRITISH
AMBASSADOR THAT BULA HAD JUST MADE SIMILAR PITCH TO HIM.
SPECIFICALLY, BULA ASKED UK TO SEND ARMS AND OTHER MILITARY
EQUIPMENT, SAID GOZ WAS REVIEWING UN OPTION, AND REFERRED
TO HIS IMMINENT VISIT TO US. WE UNDERSTAND BULA HAS
ALSO CALLED IN CHINESE (AND I SUSPECT FRENCH AS WELL).

6. COMMENT: IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT GOZ HAS DECIDED TO GO ON DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE, USING CHARGES OF SOVIET/CUBAN AGGRESSION AGAINST ZAIRE AS BASIS FOR TRYING TO GALVANIZE WIDER SUPPORT AMONG OTHER COUNTRIES. ZAIRIANS UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO FIGURE THAT SUCH CHARGES WILL SERVE TO FOCUS US ATTENTION ON SOVIET THREAT AND THEREBY ENHANCE CHANCES FOR MORE FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO ZAIRE'S REPEATED CALLS FOR HELP. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MOBUTU IS GENUINELY AND INCREASINGLY CONCERNED NOT ONLY ABOUT MILITARY PROSPECTS IN ANGOLA BUT ABOUT WHAT SOVIET BUILD-UP MEANS FOR HIS OWN SECURITY AS WELL. IN RECENT WEEKS THE GOZ HAS BEEN DEVELOPING WHAT IS NOW A FAMILIAR SCENARIO: THE THREAT TO ZAIRE'S LONG AND EXPOSED BORDER AS ENEMY FORCES IN ANGOLA PUSH FARTHER NORTH; THE STRANGULATION OF COPPER-RICH SHABA REGION BY CUTTING OFF BENGUELA RAILROAD; THE BUILD-UP OF SOVIET ARMS AND INFLUENCE IN CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE; THE THREAT TO ZAIRE'S NARROW ACCESS TO THE SEA FROM MPLA-CONTROLLED WARSHIPS. PRESUMABLE FOREGOING FACTORS WOULD BE WOVEN INTO ANY GOZ CHARGES LAID BEFORE UN. IN THIS CONNECTION, DEPT WILL RECALL THAT SOME WEEKS AGO GOZ PROPOSED INFORMING UNSC OF SOVIET THREAT AND THAT WE ASSURED GOZ OF OUR SUPPORT IF IT TOOK SUCH STEP. IF DEPT AGREES THAT GOING AHEAD NOW WITH LETTER TO SC ON THREAT IS STILL AN ADVISABLE COURSE, I RECOMMEND WE REITERATE TO GOZ OUR CONTINUED READINESS TO LEND FULL DIPLOMATIC/POLITICAL SUPPORT.

7. I EXPECT TO SEE MOBUTU SOON AFTER HE RETURNS TO KINSHASA JAN 16. IN ADDITION TO CONSULTING ON ANGOLA ALONG LINES CONTAINED REF B, I WOULD HOPE TO BE IN POSITION TO MAKE AT LEAST PRELIMINARY RESPONSE TO BULA'S POINTS IN PARA ONE ABOVE.
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